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(54) An optical fiber connector assembling method and an adhesive agent injecting jig

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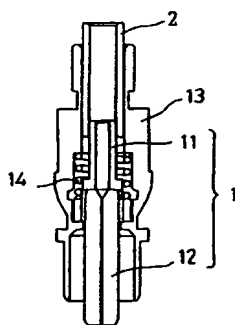


FIG. 1A

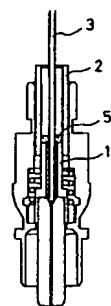


FIG. 1B

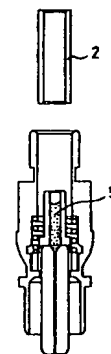


FIG. 1C

EP 0 745 874 A3

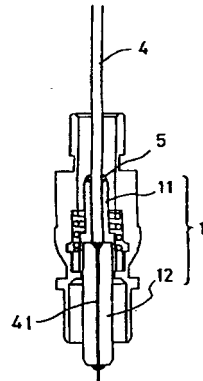


FIG. 1D



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EUROPEAN SEARCH REPORT

Application Number
EP 96 10 8794

DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED TO BE RELEVANT			
Category	Citation of document with indication, where appropriate, of relevant passages	Relevant to claim	CLASSIFICATION OF THE APPLICATION (Int.Cl.6)
P,X	EP 0 690 320 A (MOLEX INC) 3 January 1996 * claim 1; figure 3 *	1-3	G02B6/38
X	EP 0 330 399 A (AMP INC) 30 August 1989 * column 5, line 21 - line 48; figure 3 *	2,3,6 1	
X	EP 0 432 947 A (AMP INC) 19 June 1991 * column 3, line 26 - line 52; figure 3 *	6	
A	* column 3, line 31 - line 34 *	4,5	
X	US 5 222 169 A (CHANG PETER C ET AL) 22 June 1993 * claim 1; figure 7 *	6	
X	US 5 285 510 A (SLANEY PAUL) 8 February 1994 * column 7, line 13 - line 41; figure 5 *	6	
			TECHNICAL FIELDS SEARCHED (Int.Cl.6)
			G02B
The present search report has been drawn up for all claims			
Place of search BERLIN		Date of completion of the search 17 April 1997	Examiner Ciarrocca, M
<p>CATEGORY OF CITED DOCUMENTS</p> <p>X : particularly relevant if taken alone Y : particularly relevant if combined with another document of the same category A : technological background O : non-written disclosure P : intermediate document</p> <p>T : theory or principle underlying the invention E : earlier patent document, but published on, or after the filing date D : document cited in the application L : document cited for other reasons & : member of the same patent family, corresponding document</p>			

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is removed therefrom. Next, a coated optical fiber (41) which is exposed at a leading end portion thereof is inserted through the tail portion of the ferrule (1) to be fixed thereto.

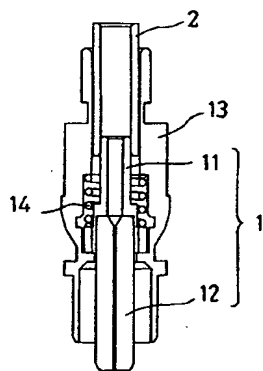


FIG. 1A

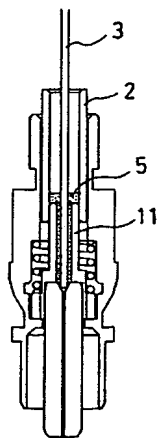


FIG. 1B

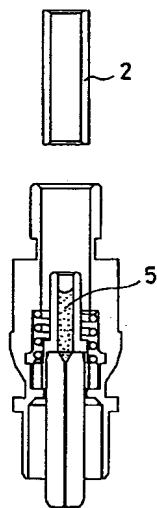


FIG. 1C

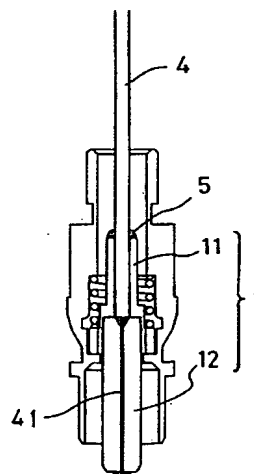


FIG. 1D

EP 0 745 874 A2

Description

The present invention relates to an optical fiber connector assembling method and to an adhesive agent injecting jig for fixing an optical fiber to a ferrule constituting an optical fiber connector.

Generally, as an optical fiber for used in a transmission of optical signals, one or more optical fibers are used through connecting means such as connectors, welding and splices. There are many cases in which are used optical fiber cables each having a high strength body for protecting a coated optical fiber from an influence to a transmission of optical signals such as disturbance and a sheath such as PVC, and also used are optical fiber connectors. The optical fiber is usually made of brittle components such as glass, etc., a diameter of which is thin as 0.1 mm. Usually, nylon is sheathed around the optical fiber, which forms a coated optical fiber having a diameter of about 1 mm. At the time of the assembling of the optical fiber cables and the optical fiber connectors, if the optical fiber connectors and the coated fiber of the optical fiber cable receive the local bending load due to the compression, the optical signal transmitted therethrough is subjected to the influence upon the transmission loss such as the leak of the optical signal to the outside, and the disconnection of the optical transmission due to the breakage of the coated optical fiber, etc., according to the optical characteristics.

Conventionally, when the optical fiber is fixed to a ferrule as a cylindrical member having a penetrating hole at a center thereof, which constitutes an optical fiber connector, it is general to use an adhesive agent, and the optical fiber connector is assembled as follows: Figs. 2A and 2B are sectional views showing processes of a conventional optical fiber connector assembling method. They show an optical fiber connector assembling method in which an injection needle 3 is inserted directly into a rear portion of a ferrule. In Fig. 2A, the injection needle 3 is inserted into a rear portion 11 of the cylindrical member through which the optical fiber passes, so that an adhesive agent 5 is injected thereinto. Next, a coated optical fiber 4 in which an optical fiber 41 is exposed at a tip portion thereof is inserted through a tail portion of a ferrule 1, so that the coated portion 4 of the optical fiber and the optical fiber 41 are fixed to the ferrule 1 (Fig. 2B).

Up to now, there has been a problem that the amount of the adhesive agent must be controlled, while confirming the tail portion of the ferrule, in such a manner that the adhesive agent overflows from the tail portion of the ferrule which is located at an inmost portion of a connector housing 13. Since the rear end portion of the ferrule is located at the inmost portion of the housing of the optical connector, there has been another problem that a removing operation of the overflowed adhesive agent is impossible. There has been still another problem that the ferrule cannot be moved in the axial direction, since the overflowed adhesive agent is flowed

into a location intermediate between the rear portion 11 of the ferrule and the housing 13, and a location on which a coil spring 14 is mounted, and therefore, the ferrule is fixed firmly to the inside of the housing.

The object of present invention is to provide a method of assembling an optical fiber to an optical fiber connector and a corresponding apparatus by which an adhesive agent is surely injected into a rear portion of the ferrule for fixing a coated optical fiber to a ferrule, and by which an overflow of the adhesive to a periphery of the ferrule is avoided.

This object is achieved by a connector assembling method showing the features of claim 1 and by a corresponding adhesive agent injecting apparatus according to the features of claim 2 and by an optical fiber connector according to the features of claim 6.

In order to attain the above-mentioned problems, the present invention is adapted to use a cylindrical injecting jig fitted around or into a tail portion of a ferrule, or to project from a rear end of a main body of a connector. Also, it is characterized by the above-mentioned adhesive agent injection jig having a port for receiving a disk-like adhesive agent, i.e., a flange portion in a radial direction at a portion into which a leading end of the injector is inserted, and having a double holes-construction in which a portion fixed to the tail portion of the ferrule is fitted into and around the ferrule. That is, an optical fiber connector assembling method according to the present invention executed when the adhesive agent injecting jig is used comprises the steps of fitting the adhesive agent injecting jig without a gap around or into a tail portion of the ferrule to thereby fix the same thereto, injecting the adhesive agent through the adhesive agent injecting jig by the injector, removing the adhesive agent injecting jig through the tail portion of the ferrule, and inserting a coated optical fiber which is exposed at a tip portion thereof, through the tail portion of the ferrule, to thereby fix the same to the ferrule.

According to the above-mentioned adhesive agent injecting jig of the optical fiber connector and the assembling method thereof, the adhesive agent injection is made easy. Further, since the adhesive agent can be confirmed on a dish-like portion of the adhesive agent injecting jig at the time of the adhesive agent injecting, the adhesive agent cannot be fitted to the other portion if the adhesive agent is stopped to be injected at that time. Besides, the attached portion to the tail portion of the ferrule is contacted closely to an inner surface and an outer surface of the tail portion of the ferrule, so that the adhesive agent is overflowed at the contacting portion thereof. Further, due to such a contour as that the jig is inserted into the tail portion of the ferrule, if the optical fiber is inserted thereinto, the adhesive is not overflowed, and therefore, the uniform injecting amount of the adhesive agent can be realized.

In the following, some preferred embodiments of the invention will be described in detail with reference to the drawings, which show:

Fig. 1A-1D are sectional views of processes of an optical fiber connector assembling method.

Fig. 2A and 2B are sectional views of processes of a conventional optical fiber connector assembling method. Fig. 3A and 3B are sectional views of processes of an optical fiber connector assembling method according to another embodiment.

Fig. 4A-4D are sectional views of processes of an optical fiber connector assembling method according to another embodiment.

Fig. 5 is a sectional view of an adhesive agent injecting apparatus.

Fig. 6 is a perspective view showing another embodiment of the adhesive agent injecting apparatus.

Figs. 1, 3 and 4 exhibit sectional views showing processes of optical fiber connector assembling methods. Figs. 1A to D are sectional views showing processes of an optical connector assembling method in which a hollow cylindrical member is used. In Fig. 1A, reference numeral 12 denotes a ferrule fore portion, 11 is a ferrule rear portion, 14 is a coil spring, and 13 is a housing of an optical connector. The ferrule fore portion 12 has a penetrating hole to which the optical fiber is inserted and fixed. Further, the ferrule rear portion 11 has a penetrating hole into which is inserted the coated portion of the optical fiber having a diameter larger than that of the penetrating hole. In Fig. 1A, a hollow cylindrical member 2 is fitted without a gap into or around a tail portion of the ferrule 1 which is a cylindrical member (Fig. 1A), an injecting needle 3 of an injector is inserted through the tail portion of the hollow cylindrical member 2, an adhesive agent 5 is injected into the cylindrical ferrule rear portion 11 (Fig. 1B), and the hollow cylindrical member 2 is removed (Fig. 1C). Next, a coated optical fiber 4 in which an optical fiber 41 is exposed at a tip portion thereof is inserted through the tail portion of the ferrule 1 to be fixed thereto (Fig. 1D).

Figs. 3A and B are sectional views showing processes of an optical connector assembling method according to another embodiment in which the injecting needle 3 is directly inserted into the ferrule rear portion 11. Here, the injecting needle 3 is inserted through the tail portion of the ferrule rear portion 11 which elongates so as to project from the rear end portion of the housing 13, then the adhesive agent 5 is injected thereto (Fig. 3A). Next, the coated optical fiber 4 in which the optical fiber 41 is exposed at a leading end portion thereof is inserted through the tail portion of the ferrule 1 to thereby be fixed thereto (Fig. 3B).

Figs. 4A to D are sectional views showing processes of an optical fiber connector assembling method according to another embodiment. Now, the steps of optical fiber connector assembling method shown in Fig. 4 will be described.

(1) The adhesive agent injecting jig 15 is inserted into the rear end portion of the ferrule rear portion 11 mounted in the simple connector housing 13 (Fig. 4A). On this occasion, it is pushed firmly thereinto without a gap between the disk portion of the adhesive agent injecting jig 15 and the rear end portion of the housing 13 in such a manner that the fore end portion of the injecting jig is inserted into the rear end portion of the ferrule with close contact.

(2) The injecting needle 3 is inserted into the jig through the receiving port of the rear end portion of the adhesive agent injecting jig 15, then the adhesive agent is injected thereto. The adhesive agent 15 is injected up to the receiving port of the adhesive agent injecting jig (Fig. 4B).

(3) The adhesive agent injecting jig 15 is removed from the tail portion of the ferrule (Fig. 4C).

(4) The coated optical fiber which is exposed at a leading end portion thereof is inserted through the tail portion of the ferrule to be fixed thereto. Thus, the adhesive agent can be injected without overflow.

Fig. 5 is a sectional view of a hollow cylindrical adhesive agent injecting jig 15 used in Fig. 4. As shown in Fig. 5, the adhesive agent injecting jig 15 has a wall of a double construction at an inserted portion which is to be inserted into the tail portion of the ferrule. Due to such a construction, it is held stably to the tail portion of the ferrule and the adhesive agent is hardly to leak. Also, the inlet portion into which the injecting needle is inserted has a disk-like adhesive agent receiving port. Due to this receiving port, the adhesive agent cannot overflow and thereby not adhere to the main body of the connector.

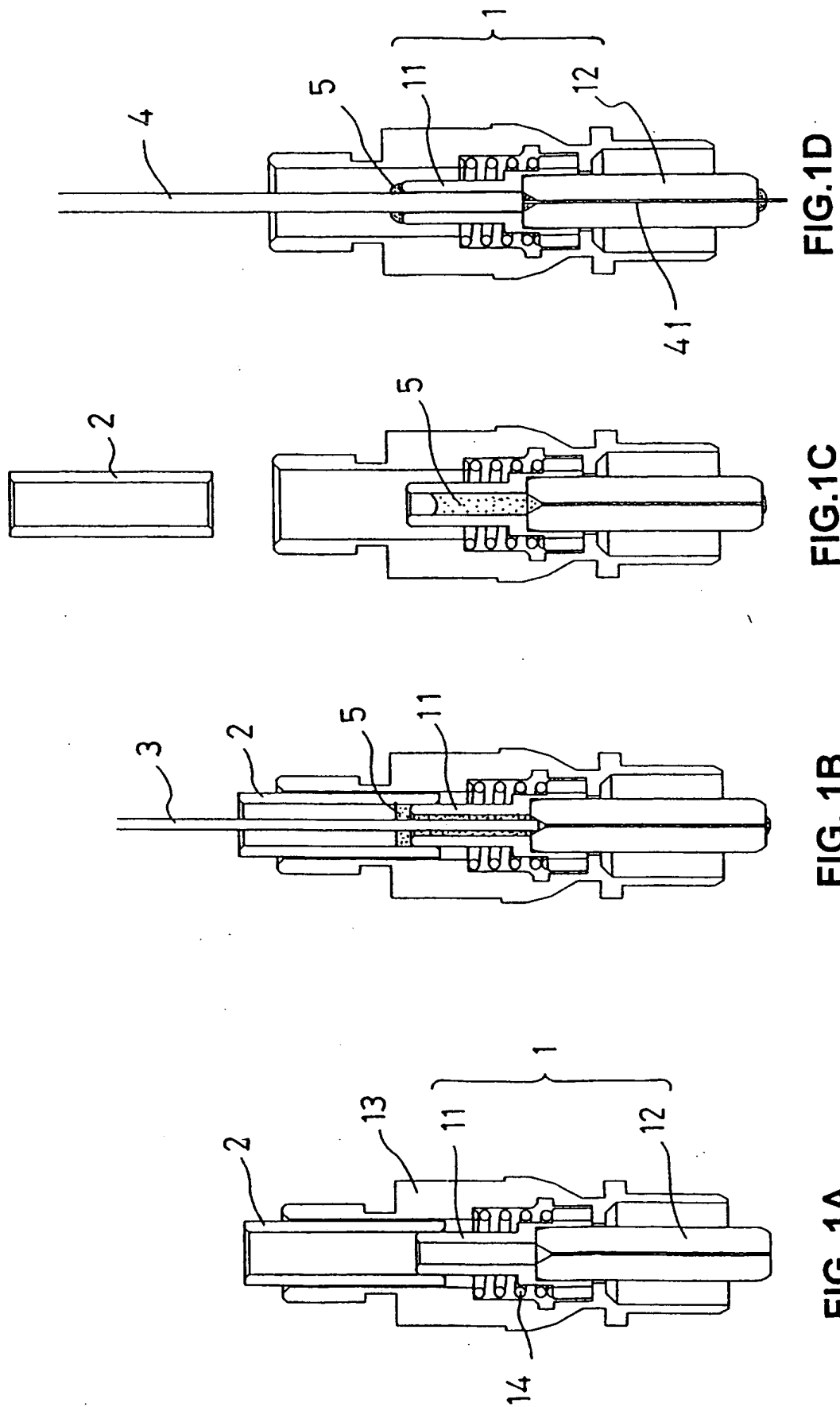
Fig. 6 shows another embodiment of an adhesive agent injecting jig in which the receiving port is funnel-shaped with a cone-shaped inlet port.

As described above, the optical connector and the assembling method thereof according to the invention has an advantage that the injection can be facilitated and the adhesive agent is hard to leak by using the cylindrical adhesive agent injecting jig for adhering and fixing the optical fiber connector of the ferrule and the optical fiber with a proper quantity of the adhesive agent injected. Further, the adhesive agent is prevented from leaking from the adhesive agent injecting jig by arranging the flange-like receiving port of the adhesive agent to the end portion of the injecting jig. Also, the portion

which is inserted into the tail portion of the ferrule is made into the double construction, so that the holding of the inserted portion to the ferrule is firm and the adhesive agent cannot be overflowed from the inserted portion and fitted to the other portion. Also, the same effect as those in a case where the above-mentioned cylindrical injecting jig is used can be obtained by elongating the rear end portion of the ferrule of the optical fiber connector, so as to project from the tail portion of the housing.

Claims

1. An optical fiber connector assembling method using a cylindrically shaped ferrule (1) having at a fore portion (12) thereof a first penetrating hole for receiving and fixing an optical fiber (41) therein, and having at a rear portion (11) thereof a second penetrating hole having a diameter larger than that of said first penetrating hole, and which comprises a housing portion (13) for containing said ferrule (1), said method comprising the steps of:
 - fitting a hollow cylindrical member (2) into or around a rear end portion of the rear portion (11) of said ferrule (1); injecting an adhesive agent (5) into said second penetrating hole through said hollow cylindrical member (2); removing said hollow cylindrical member (2); inserting a coated optical fiber (4) in which the optical fiber (41) is exposed at a tip portion thereof, through said rear end portion of said ferrule; and fixing said optical fiber (41) in said first penetrating hole.
2. An adhesive agent injecting jig for injecting an adhesive agent (5) into a second penetrating hole of a cylindrically-shaped ferrule (1) of an optical fiber connector, said ferrule having at a fore portion (12) thereof a first penetrating hole for receiving and fixing an optical fiber (41) therein, and having at a rear portion (11) thereof a second penetrating hole having a diameter larger than that of said first penetrating hole, and comprising a housing portion (13) for containing said ferrule (1), characterized by said jig being a hollow cylindrical member (2) fitted into or around a tail portion of a rear end portion of said ferrule (1).
3. An adhesive agent injecting jig as claimed in claim 2, characterized in that a rear end portion of said hollow cylindrical member (2) protrudes from a rear end portion of said housing portion (13).
4. An adhesive agent injecting jig as claimed in claim 2 or 3, characterized in that said rear end portion of said cylindrical member (2) is funnel-shaped.
5. An adhesive agent injecting jig as claimed in claim 2 or 3, characterized in that said rear end portion of said cylindrical member (2) has a conical flange portion (21).
6. An optical fiber connector which comprises a cylindrically-shaped ferrule (1) having at a fore end portion (12) thereof a first penetrating hole for receiving and fixing an optical fiber (41) therein, and having at a rear portion (11) thereof a second penetrating hole having a diameter larger than that of said first penetrating hole, and comprising a housing portion (13) for containing said ferrule (1), characterized in that a rear end portion of said ferrule (1) protrudes from a tail portion of said housing in order to facilitate an injection of an adhesive agent (5) into said second penetrating hole of said ferrule (1).



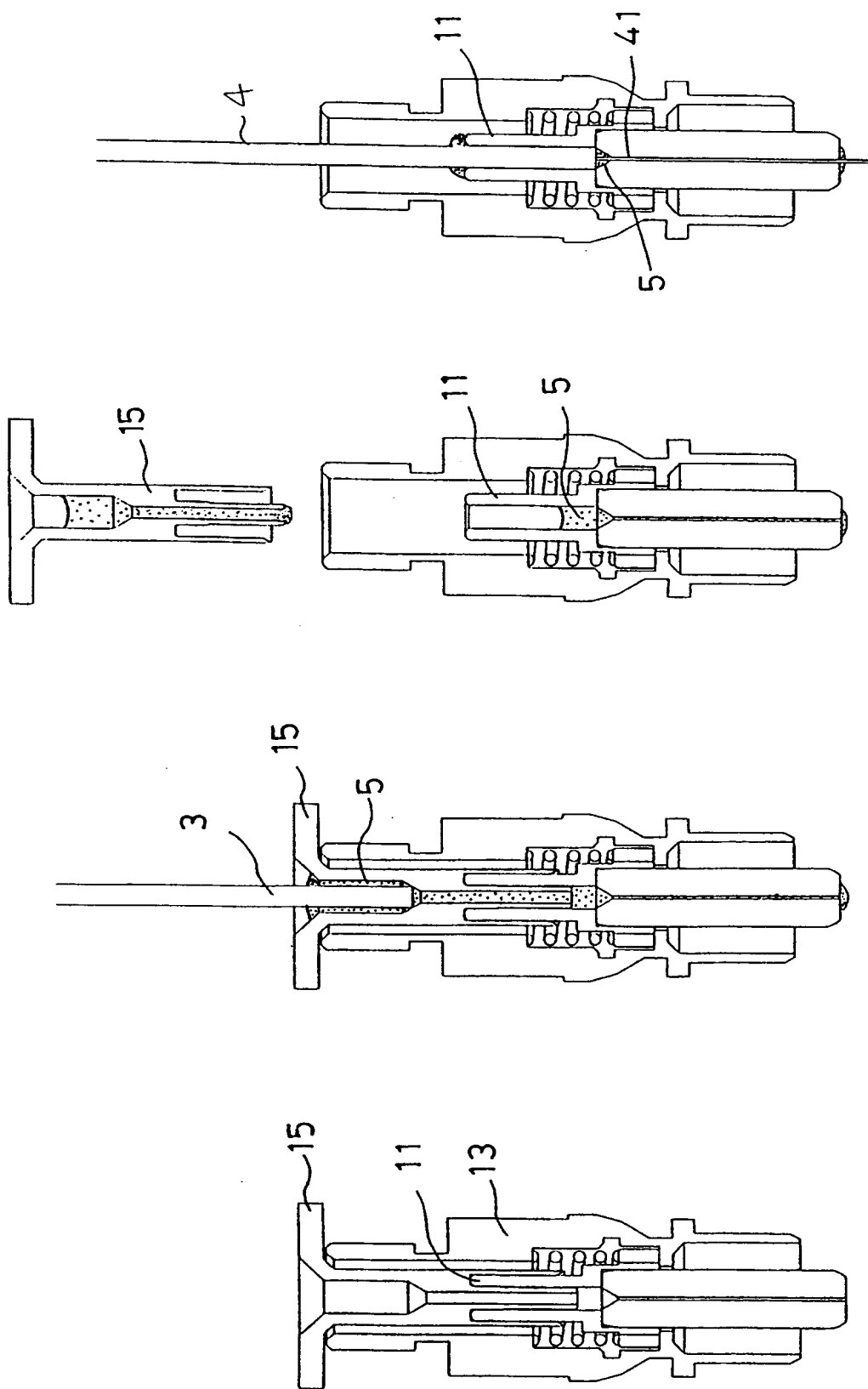


FIG. 4D

FIG. 4C

FIG. 4B

FIG. 4A

FIG. 5

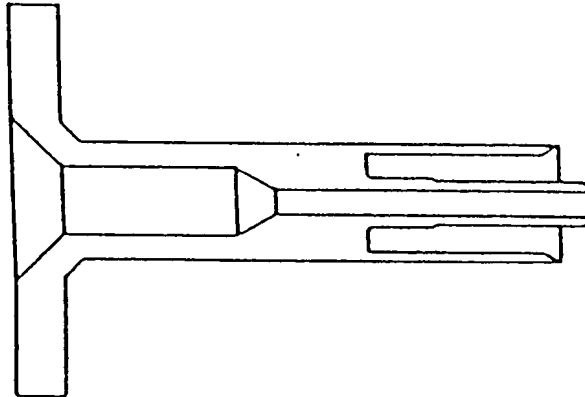
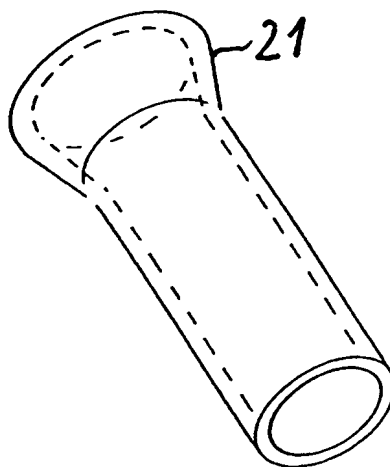


FIG. 6



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